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ABSTRACT

This document comprises two papers presented at a Round Table on Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities at the 1984 general conference of IFLA. In "Library and Information Services for Cultural Minorities: A Commentary and Analysis of a Report to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science," E. J. Josey (United States) describes the commission, defines "ethnicity," describes the ethnic situation in the United States, and outlines the activities and findings of the Task Force on Library and Information Services to Cultural Minorities which was established in 1980. "Information Needs of Two Papuan Village Communities (Kapari and Viriolo) and Rural Development: A Study Report" by Deveni Temu (New Guinea), describes the social organization, economic activities, and community services of the two villages and reports the findings of a survey which involved face-to-face interviews and discussions with several government officers as well as 56 villagers in Kapari and 25 in Viriolo. Discussions were also conducted with leaders of sporting clubs, formal groups, and selected individuals. Survey findings cover government and village perceptions of information needs, government and village modes of information delivery, and possible solutions to identified problems. (THC)

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ROUND TABLE ON ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

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LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR CULTURAL MINORITIES: A COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS OF A REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR CULTURAL MINORITIES: A COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS OF A REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

By

E.J. Josey

I am delighted to have this opportunity to address the IFLA Roundtable on Library Services to Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities. I am reminded that this is the third IFLA Conference that a program has been mounted by this group -- first in Montreal, and last year in Munich, and now at this historic conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

Before I share with you my summary of this very important report, there may be those present who are wondering, what is this thing called the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science? I will take a few moments to describe the Commission. The most recent and best description of the work of the Commission can be found in the 1982-83 Annual Report of the National Commission which states the following:

> Since its establishment in 1970, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science has worked with Congress, the executive branch, and the entire library and information community to develop policies and plans to meet the library and information needs of the people of the United States. During its first ten years of service, the Commission worked to identify the library and information needs of the American people and to define national goals, policies, and plans for library and information services. The culmination of that decade was the landmark White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1979. This event and

the many other specific accomplishments of the Commission's first ten years are discussed in its annual report for 1980-81, subtitled "A Decade of Accomplishment."

NCLIS is directed by its enabling legislation (P.L. 91-345) to advise and assist the executive and legislative branches and the library/information community. In addition to these ongoing responsibilities, the Commission established for itself three major program objectives as it began its second decade of service:

. The development of specifications for library legislation,

. improving the dissemination of federal information, and

. improving library and information services through resource sharing and applications of technology.

During FY 1983, the Commission's three major program thrusts were 1) Improving Library and Information Services to Meet Changing Needs, 2) Technology and Productivity, and 3) Improving the dissemination of Federal Information. The Commission addressed the library and information needs of special constituencies through publication of the report of its Task Force on Library and Information Services to Cultural Minorities. In accordance with its legislative mandate, the Commission also began a study of the special library and information needs of the elderly, one of our fastest-growing population groups. America's rural citizens constitute another rapidly growing component of the population. The NCLIS National Rural Information Services Development Program, which addresses the diverse library and information needs of rural citizens...[1]

It is my hope that the foregoing gave you a good description of the National Commission. In the future, I may refer to the National Commission as NCLIS, the acronym that we use in America to shorten the title.

We began our report by pointing out that the population of the United States is quite diverse in terms of race, religion, and national origin. Evidence of this fact is clearly seen in the identification and location of 106 ethnic groups, who live in the United States by the editors of The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. It has been the unique contribution of all of the 106 various ethnic, racial, and national groups that have forged and shaped a democratic society and contributed immensely to the collective historical and cultural heritage of this nation.

It might be important to put into context the word "ethnicity" as we think in terms of ethnic groups in America. There has been a great concern about ethnicity in the United States and there has been a rise of a new ethnic history that has been an important force in the historical scholarship during the last 20 years in America. This has come about primarily as we Americans say, because of the failure of the melting pot. Of course, as I said earlier, there are about 106 ethnic groups in America and there was a myth in America that there was great assimilation and that the melting pot would make us all a new kind of American and of course in the last 20 years we have known that this has been an historical myth. During the 1970's, greater cultural pluralism developed in the United States when many ethnic groups, influenced by successes of Black civil rights campaigns of the 1960's, mounted their own demands for justice and recognition. These groups rediscovered their ancestral languages, and they tried to revive the foreign cultures of their forebearers. Whether

this new ethnicity retains its momentum depends on the degree to which the groups can transcend the barriers to social class and economic mobility, which their own cultural pluralist behavior has imposed on them.

In his definition of ethnicity, Robert P. Swierenga of Kent State University indicates that the word "ethnicity" comes from the Greek word ethnos, and this means nation or peoplehood, which gives a shared sense of identity, "or the socialization process by which individuals in racial or religious groups inherit and share the common culture of their groups. Prior to the turbulent 1960's, few people except scholars would have recognized the term 'ethnicity;' immigrant groups in our country were simply called nationality groups, and it was assumed that this status was a temporary way-station on the inevitable road of assimilation."[2] Following the big thrust by African Americans in the late 1950's and the early 1960's for their civil and human rights, there sprang up other groups, the American Indians who were seeking Red power similar to the African Americans who were seeking Black power. Concomitantly, Eastern Europeans and others in America began to take pride in their heritage and the prevailing social assumption about nationality groups began to die. One scholar has said that "The American public began to shift from the ideal of a homogenized culture toward one of cultural diversity and ethnic pluralism."[3] Before I leave this section of my paper, I would like to say that in spite of the fact that there is great interest in one's ethnic heritage in America, nevertheless, there is still the ideal of Americanization, which is part and parcel of the American heritage.

In a penetrating and illuminating essay, John Hope Franklin, John Matthews Manly, Distinguished Service Professor of History Emeritus, The University of Chicago, in his discussion of the Americanization of the colonists, pointed out

that Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, in 1782 described the process of Americanization and the American person as follows:

> He is either an European or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country....He is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.[4]

Professor Franklin indicates that the foregoing statements "was one of the earliest and most clearcut expressions of the nation of the pluralistic society in America, one that involved the creation of an entirely new mode of life that would complement but not entirely eradicate the ethnic backgrounds of those who were part of the process." The 18th Century scholar who was so perceptive has been supported in recent years by an explosion of the myth of the melting pot in America by such authors as Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan in their book, Beyond the Melting Pot (1963), Andrew Greeley, in his work, Ethnicity in the United States (1974), Arthur Mann, The One and the Many (1980), and James Stuart Olson, The Ethnic Dimension in American History (1980).

Among the American ethnic groups there are the cultural minorities, the American Indians, the Asian Americans, the Hispanic Americans, and the Afro-Americans, who are for the most part nonwhite. While ethnic groups in the

country for the last 20 years have been fighting to preserve their own culture and roots, cultural minorities have not had reasonable access to library and informational services to aid them in the preservation of their cultural roots as well as library service to provide basic information, which is the center of education and the lifeblood of a democratic society. In order to reflect the culture of minority groups, library collections must include materials by and about these groups. For the last 20 years, cultural minorities have been insisting on the principle of the inclusion of bilingual and bicultural resources being available in their fight to improve and strengthen library services. Many studies have unmistakably shown that resources of bilingual and bicultural materials in public, school, and academic libraries have been woefully inadequate and in too many instances nonexistent.

The Task Force on Library and Information Services to Cultural Minorities was established by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in 1980. The impetus for the appointment of the Task Force stemmed from the fact that minorities felt that the White House Conference on Library and Information Services did not adequately address the library and information needs of this large segment of the American population. Concomitantly, this NCLIS Commission had been considering for some time the appointment of such a Task Force and had commissioned a paper to look into the ramifications of this subject.

The Task Force was asked to explore the current status of library and information services programs in support of the library and information needs and desires as expressed by minority groups. It was also requested to consider the development of programs designed to encourage ethnic groups in local communities to cooperate in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of library programs, information and referral centers, and cultural and/or educational centres.

Sixteen persons were appointed to the Task Force representing Afro-Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. In addition, individuals representing government agencies and other organizations, who have responsibility for and are involved in programs designed to serve the library and information needs of cultural minorities were also invited to participate. I had the good fortune of being appointed to Chair the group.

The Work of the Task Force

The Task Force held its first meeting in November, 1980, and by February, 1981, had revised the original charge and agreed upon a new charge that would guide the work of its members. It was agreed that we would:

> Explore the status of library and information services, resources and programs, concentrating on four minority groups: American Indians, Asian, Black, and Hispanic; and produce a final report with recommendations for improvements in five broad areas: Materials and Resources, Personnel, Programming, Funding and Needs. Elements to be included in the recommendations are legislative provisions; equitable dispersion of existing funds; cultural awareness programming; cooperation with other service agencies; recruitment of minorities into librarianship; education of library personnel including continuing education; collection development utilization and preservation; production of multimedia materials by and for minorities; and literacy programs.

The efforts of the Task Force were accomplished through the work of subcommittees that included the five broad areas: Needs, Materials and Resources, Personnel, Programs, Funding, and a sixth category, Other Minorities. The work of the subcommittees underwent careful scrutiny by the full Task Force.

Sometimes this meant that the basic outline and subsequent preliminary reports were rejected as submitted, and the subcommittees were required to alter the work substantially. Of special concern to the Task Force was the presentation of information and the use of terminology which would not be offensive to the four cultural minority groups whose library and information needs were being addressed: American Indians, Asian Americans, Black Americans, and Hispanic Americans. The Task Force was equally concerned that the limited focus of its work would be fully understood, and that, in its limited time, the group could not make a study of all of the 106 ethnic groups and other underserved groups within the American public. While the Task Force recognized the importance of community and information referral services to minority communities, it elected not to duplicate the work of that Task Force and it appointed Jean Coleman a member to serve as a liaison to this group. Early during the deliberations of the Task Force there was a heated debate on whether or not the Task Force should confine its work to the four disadvantaged minorities or should it include other minorities. It was overwhelmingly voted by the Task Force to limit its considerations and concentrate on the most disadvantaged minorities: the American Indians, Asian Americans, Afro-Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Considering whether or not it was necessary to make a needs assessment, after serious deliberation and reflection, the Task Force agreed that there had been a wide variety of assessment studies made about three of the minority groups, but there had not been a library and information needs assessment of Asian Americans. We were fortunate that this Commission provided funding for a library and information needs assessment of Asian Americans that was conducted and appears in the Appendix of the Report. Although the Task Force's focus was on the four disadvantaged minorities, it was decided that a short essay on other minorities would also be included in the Appendix.

The Task Force's Perspective

From the very outset, the Task Force agreed on six broad and general concepts regarding libraries and a multicultural society:

- A belief in the concept of a multilingual and multicultural society.
- Libraries are essential to all segments of society to provide the people with basic information to support education, the democratic process, and preserve the record of our heritage and culture.
- That responsibility for library service is a tripartite responsibility to local, state, and federal levels of government.
- Libraries play an important and unique role in the integration of cultural differences within the community.
- Public libraries as community institutions have a unique role in the dissemination of information to all persons in society without the imposition of fees.
- All libraries can assist cultural minorities, the fastest growing segments of the population, to become equal participants in society through access to information.

  This is most important in a society in which we are calling an information society.

In order to ascertain up-to-date and reliable information to assist the Task Force in developing a viable program with recommendations for strengthening and promoting library services for minorities, it was necessary to establish a forum for the library community to have an opportunity to suggest the types of library services that are required to meet the library and information needs of minority communities in the country. The American Library Association

provided the NCLIS Task Force this opportunity at the 1981 Annual Conference that was held in San Francisco. Two hearings were held at the conference on Saturday, June 27 and on Monday, June 29, 1981 for this purpose. Twenty-two persons participated in the hearings. They addressed themselves to a wide range of topics that were very useful to the Task Force. In addition, letters were received from persons who were unable to attend.

The Findings

Our findings were varied, interesting and challenging. The 1980 United States Census reveals that the four major cultural minority groups in the United States today are Black, which comprise 26,488,218; Hispanic persons, 14,605,883; Asian and Pacific Islander, 3,500,636; and American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut, 1,418,195 persons. They comprise one-fifth of the nation's population.

In the year 2000, the projected population of the four cultural minority groups will consist of 77,942,000 persons. This figure represents 29 percent of the projected total American population of 267,900,000. The number of Blacks will have increased to 35,795,000; Hispanics, to 30,530,000; Asian and Pacific Islanders, to 9,934,000; and American Indians, to 2,223,000. In short, almost one-third of the United States population in the year 2000 will be composed of the four major cultural minority groups. Looking ahead to the year 2025, it is projected that the Black population will be 45,795,000; the Hispanic 41,892,000; the Asian American and Pacific Islander 14,408,000; and the American Indian 2,767,000*, making a combined total minority population of 104,862,000.

*This projection for the American Indian population is up to the year 2010. There is no projection for the year 2025 for this group.

This population growth will represent 35 percent of the total American population of 301,022,000. To describe this phenomenal growth in another way, over one-third of the United States population in the year 2025 will be comprised of the four cultural minority groups that are the focus of this report.[5] From the foregoing projections, it is clear that minorities are growing at a faster rate than the population as a whole, and during the next three decades, the proportion of the American population of white and of European ancestry will decline at a rapid rate.

To plan rationally for the future, the nation must be cognizant of the fact that by the year 2000, more than 30 percent of the American population will be 65 years of age or older. Since American society is rapidly growing older and the emerging younger age group will be comprised primarily of minority groups, the future work force of the nation will shift heavily to minorities. Today's young adults, born in the 1950's, will be retiring from the work force and depending more and more on state and federal budgets for benefits. These facts have serious implications for America's economic planning, the educational system, and library and information services. This means that, in the future, the working population will be smaller than that of the retired and unemployed, and it will consist of a larger proportion of minorities. Since minorities will constitute a major segment of the work force and will contribute substantially to the economic well-being of the nation, the United States government must be certain that its minority population receive quality education and are guaranteed access to library resources and information. Further, the minorities of the country must have the knowledge and skills to use the new technologies in the workplace as well as in every aspect of their lives. The nation cannot afford to ignore the education, training, and library needs of its minorities.

The foregoing projections of the rapid growth of minority groups, coupled with the rapidly changing heavy industrial economy to one based increasingly on information, high technology, communications and services, make it imperative that libraries in the United States be prepared to support and provide the information and educational needs of a fairly substantial segment of society that, in too many instances, has been ignored in the development of services and programming, and unfortunately, they have not known how to utilize library services to its greatest personal and professional advantages. Moreover, it is also in the best interest of the nation that the unique and valuable heritages within our multicultural population be sustained and preserved in the languages of their cultures. This is necessary for the benefit of this country as it seeks to improve human relations among the majority of the peoples of the world with whom the minority population of the United States has a natural cultural affinity. Multicultural programming and bilingual resources in the libraries of the nation constitute a paramount necessity for minorities and represent an investment in people and our nation's future.

We found that cultural minorities have special information needs relative to housing, health and welfare assistance, educational opportunities, jobs and career counseling, legal rights, consumer and political affairs; as well as many others; in order to have access to the general body of literature, there is a need for materials and information by and for minority group members. There is a great need for bilingual and bicultural materials.

The findings support the need for a national commitment to the recruitment and the training of minority personnel for careers in library and information science. A recent survey shows that minorities constitute only 11.8 percent of the professional staff of libraries, yet there are more than 40 million

minorities in the American society. Minority staff in libraries are also concentrated at the beginning professional levels and in nonprofessional positions in libraries. They must be given an opportunity for promotion and upward mobility. Funding sources should be expanded and more levels of funding should be available for professional and support staff to aid in the recruitment of minorities. Continuing library education opportunities and staff development must be made available to provide the mechanism for minorities staffs of libraries to grow and develop. Institutional racism has been one of the most destructive barriers to minority participation in librarianship at all levels, and professional organizations and accredited library schools should take the leadership to accelerate in the recruitment of minorities. Funding from private, state, and federal sources are recommended as a means of removing financial barriers for cultural minorities who wish to enter the profession.

In the area of library services and programs, it is quite apparent that fiscal constraints have limited outreach and other programs that have been beneficial to minority communities. Library administrators are urged to provide programs and services to minority communities or else there will continue to be a wide gap between the information poor and information rich classes in America. There is a need for cultural minority participation in library program planning and there is an urgent need for greater involvement of minority communities in setting library policy and program direction. To accomplish the aforementioned, it is imperative that minority communities be represented on boards of trustees and other policymaking or advisory library boards. Library-based adult education programs and basic literacy programs must take into consideration cultural and language differences among community residents. Programs considered significant to the service of cultural mirority groups include community information and referral services, oral history projects,

library cable television programs, ethnic history and cultural awareness projects, consumer protection education projects, multi-media ethnic materials, and computer assisted instruction. More importantly, these programs must be developed in concert with minority communities.

Materials and resources by and about cultural minorities must be collected, disseminated, and preserved if libraries are to attract these groups. There are several access barriers including inadequate facilities, limited or restricted collections, lack of bilingual and bicultural materials, and censorship by omission, i.e, failing to purchase materials by and about minorities, and charges for computerized searches in libraries. The Task Force also made special note of the collections and resources needs of the minority academic libraries including Black collections, Hispanic institutions and the American Indian controlled institutions.

Turning to financing library programs for minorites, a news article with regards to funds which crossed my desk last December dramatically portrays the plight of libraries. It was revealed that funding for services to minorities have come primarily from Federal sources for the most part. Many invaluable programs have been eliminated by library administrators, because of the cutbacks in Federal dollars. Most minorities in the United States reside in urban centers, and statistics reveal that urban libraries are receiving a decreasing share of their local budgets, and additional funds are not being allocated and forthcoming. Those libraries that have provided outreach services have found it rather difficult to continue some of the programs. Funding for library programs and resources in public, college, and university as well as school libraries were found to be woefully inadequate. The Task Force recommends that libraries should not rely solely on the funding of such programs

and services from external resources, but that funding should be a part of the library's regular budget. For the funding of publicly supported libraries, the Task Force strongly recommends a tripartite approach from local, state, and Federal levels. In addition, funding should be sought from other than governmental sources such as business and industry, trusts and foundations, and endowments. Publicly supported libraries are urged to avoid charging fees, which create barriers to the use of library and information resources and services by minorities.

The Task Force concluded its report with two important indices: one is a report on the Asian American Needs survey and the second appendix is a short essay on Other Minorities. From the findings resulting from our deliberations and investigation, 42 recommendations were made under 5 groupings related to (1) Information Needs of Minorities, (2) Library Personnel, (3) Services and Programs, (4) Materials and Resources, and (5) Financing Programs for Minorities.

It is the Task Force's hope that all librarians and all library and information providers read the report carefully and hopefully will seriously consider the 42 recommendations.

After the Task Force completed its report in 1982, we were invited to appear before the National Commission or NCLIS, to present the report. As the Chairman of the group, it was my responsibility to make an oral presentation. Several members of the Task Force accompanied me to Washington to make the report to the Commission. After my presentation, there was a heated exchange between some members of the Commission, notably those who had been appointed by the Reagan Administration, who took exception to some of the things we said. Nevertheless, those of us who were there felt that it was a good exchange, because the Chairman and the members of the Task Force did not retreat from our

recommendations and our positions. Following my appearance before NCLIS, the Report was published in 1983, and much to our surprise the Commission rejected eight of the 42 recommendations. The Chairman of the Commission, Elinor M. Hashim, wrote in her Foreword to the Report:

> The Task Force has fully met its charge "to explore the status of library and information services, resources, and programs, concentrating on four minority groups...and to produce a final report with recommendations for improvements..." Beyond meeting the charge, the results of the Task Force have caused the Commission to look carefully at the implications of the ideas expressed in the recommendations. In short, the Task Force has taken us beyond the immediate concerns for library and information services to cultural minorities into an arena of other major issues such as whether to assess fees for certain public library services. We have accepted the challenge to concern ourselves with some of these other issues as well as with the specific recommendations of the report.
>
> It is important to note that this is a report to the Commission from an independent Task Force that was convened by the Commission. We have not assisted the Task Force substantively in the preparation of the report, and have been especially careful not to attempt to influence the expression of the recommendations in any way. For the purpose of consistency, unless a specific type of library was indicated, we assumed that each of the recommendations referred to public libraries. Also, although the Task Force concentrated on the four largest cultural minority groups in this country, we share with them the belief that the recommendations will be of benefit to our entire society.

The Commission endorses the majority of the 42 recommendations in this report. However, just as there was a diversity of interests and views among the members of the Task Force, we have differing views and do not agree with all the recommendations. While the Commission supports strongly the fundamental philosophy of the report, we have declined to support eight of the 42 recommendations at this time.

The eight recommendations that the Commission failed to support are Recommendations 7, 8, 30, 31, 38, 5, 25, and 37. Of course, the Commission had a right to reject some of the recommendations, but members of the Task Force felt that the Commission should have discussed their rejections with us before the report was printed. The Commission failed to give us the courtesy of responding to their rejection of these eight recommendations before they went into print. This was the first time that the Commission had rejected recommendations or at least publicly gone on record rejecting recommendations of a report presented by any given task force. Eric Moon, a former President of the American Library Association, has recently written an assessment of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. He seriously questioned the good that the Commission does for the library community in America. Eric Moon points out that "Three of the eight rejected recommendations dealt with financial barriers to information access, and two of these addressed the fee question directly. The Commission's response to these three was: 'The Commission supports, in general, the concept of 'free' basic library service. However, in order to take advantage of the enormous power of technology, it may be necessary to pass on certain related costs to users.'"

Continuing, Eric Moon writes "As John Berry notes in an LJ editorial on this report, the NCLIS-sponsored White House Conference had voted that '...all persons should have free access, without charge or fee to the individual, to information in public and publicly-supported libraries.' Similar positions have been adopted by the NCLIS precursor, the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, by the American Library Association, the Public Library Association, and numerous State and national organizations. 'In that sense, the NCLIS Task Force recommendations echo widely accepted principles of public library service.'"

In the preparation of his article on the National Commission, I was interviewed by Eric Moon as well as many other people for their views on the Commission and Eric asked me about the rejection of the eight recommendations. I was very candid and reported that members of the Task Force on Library Service to Minorities were very upset about the rejection and that we were insulted, because we were not given an opportunity to respond, nor did we have the information that the Commission had rejected eight of the recommendations until we had read this information in print. Of course, I made the observation that once again minorities were treated as minorities. Concluding his article, Eric Moon said, "To the best of our knowledge, the Commission's response to this report is unprecedented, and it's possible, again, that lack of experience with position-taken might have contributed to the Commission's discourtesy in not even informing the Task Force Chair of its actions prior to publication."

Now, some might raise the question: why should you be upset when 34 of the recommendations made by the Task Force have been accepted by the Commission? While we are pleased that 34 recommendations were accepted, however, the other eight were critical and are just as important to the delivery of library services to minorities.

Your next question might very well be, how do you plan to rectify the situation? I am pleased to report that as President of the American Library Association, with the approval of the ALA Executive Board, I have established a special Presidential Committee to examine library services to minorities as well as to suggest ways in which the American Library Association might implement the recommendations made by the National Commission on Library and Information Science Report on Library Services to Cultural Minorities, as well as reopening a dialogue with the National Commission.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to share this report with you.

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2. Swierenga, Robert P., "Ethnic History," Ethnic Forum, Journal of Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Bibliography. 4:3.

3. Ibid.

4. John Hope Franklin, "Libraries in a Pluralistic Society," in Libraries and the Life of the Mind. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977) pp. 3-4.

5. The Task Force is indebted to Dr. Gregory Spencer, Demographic Statistician, U.S. Bureau of the Census, for projections on Blacks, Asian Americans, and the total American population; for the Hispanic projections, Dr. Roberto P. Haro, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs, University of California, Berkeley; and to Thomas E. Berry, Chief, Population Branch, Indian Health Service, for the American Indian population projections.

6. The summary of the findings of the Task Force Report it taken primarily from the Executive Summary of the Report that I prepared as Chairman.

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IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE, NAIROBI 1984

IFLA ROUND TABLE ON LIBRARY SERVICE TO ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

INFORMATION NEEDS OF TWO PAPUAN VILLAGE COMMUNITIES (KAPARI & VIRIOLO) AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes I wonder how on earth I ever became a librarian when I stop to think that most of the 3 million or so people in Papua New Guinea are neither literate nor have any apparent interest in becoming so. Many have simply the minimum basis of literacy provided by a more or less successful primary school education in a language that was not their own. Even today, primary school education is far from universal.

There are of course libraries as all the world understands them in Papua New Guinea but these are centred mainly in the two universities or other learning institutions where they provide for the information and study needs of students and academics. For most Papua New Guineans, there is no public library service. So an important question for a librarian (most of whom are of course working in just the kind of library I have mentioned): what relevance his work has or libraries in general have to the general population of the country; most of whom still lead relatively traditional economic and therefore rural based lives.

In the traditional societies of Papua New Guinea, information needs were recognized by the community and in most cases were fully met within the cultural tradition. The integration of 700 or so different language groups of Papua New Guinea into a single nation or rather the continuing process of that integration (for its far from being complete) has inevitably led to new information needs in almost every area of existence. Today, there is no language or cultural group which has not been touched by modern change.

I think we might say that there are basically two divisions of information need. One is the set of needs which the people themselves perceive (and there are many of those and they vary from society) and another is a set of needs which they remain ignorant. That last remark might sound patronizing but surely we must all recognize that the tremendous changes

that are still occuring in Papua New Guinea - changes in the economy, changes in relationships with other countries, changes in the political system, changes in education; in fact the whole result of Western penetration of the country have created an unstoppable process of change, the implications of which most people remain ignorant. The government therefore has a heavy responsibility of foreseeing the information needs across the country and of attempting to meet them in a strategy to promote national development.

If the people of Papua New Guinea are going to be able to cope with the changes that have already swept over them and continue to do so, there must be dialogue between government agencies and others in authority and the people themselves to reach as full as possible an understanding of both of these sets of information needs and clear simply operated and effective strategies for meeting them must be quickly decided upon and implemented.

It was partly my experience as a village born and raised Papua New Guinean and partly my training and work as a librarian in an institution of higher learning that I became increasingly aware and shared in the puzzlement of the workings of the government and its activities in rural development and other fields in Kapari and Viriolo villages. These have led me to think over the problems my people face in regard to rural development or change and to feel concerned that so many of the questions they see as important remain unasked or unanswered. It was this concern that led me to undertake a recent study into the information needs of my own people.[1]

This paper is based on the findings of a survey which investigated the information needs of Kapari (my father's village) and Viriolo (my mother's village) as regards rural development or change.

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SYNOPSIS OF KAPARI & VIRIOLO VILLAGES

Location & Cultural connections

Kapari and Viriolo are two of several villages connected through language and culture with the other Hula and Aroma villages which are strung along the coast of the Central Province to the South east of Port Moresby. From Kaparoko to Lalaura, a distance of 100 kilometres, the coastal villages form a dialect chain of what linguists now see as a single language, with its very localised dialects, and through a shared basis of culture and recent history, these villages may be seen as having common information needs and a common set of communication modes. To a large degree this is true, but factors such as the early establishment of road connection between the Hula villages and Port Moresby, and the stronger economic development of the cape Rodney area, as well as differences in traditional areas of activity, affect the individuality of today's needs.

Situated at the eastern end of Hula speaking villages and approximately 200 kilometres from Port Moresby, Kapari and Viriolo are unusual in their proximity to each other. Kapari stands on a small sandy penisula formed by the Auro River and the Coral Sea. Today some of its houses are placed well back on the firm ground behind the village, forming its northern edge. The rest stand in traditional manner close to the sea on the black sand which shelves into the water. At high tide the sea laps beneath the floors of the nearest row. Viriolo is only 20 metres away, across a strip of water where the river joins the sea. Its houses are built above a sandbank whose boundaries constantly shift, but which even at high tide affords dry ground in the centre of the village. The Viriolo are comparatively recent arrivals, having migrated from Hula and Alukuni villages some 75 years ago.

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Social Organization

Kapari and Viriolo are patrilineal and patriachal societies, in which the family is a basic unit. The eldest male child inherits the rights and privileges of the family, such as land entitlements, fruit trees, the father's house and other possessions. Extended family ties are maintained through reciprocal responsibilities. Sharing of surplus food is one such responsibility.

People identify with their clans, as well as with their families. The clan system of Kapari was deliberately restructured in 1965 to give a more equitable basis for the annual collection of church funds. The three new clans subsumed the six older traditional clans groups, whose respective numerical sizes had become unbalanced; each is divided into sub-clans. Viriolo has kept its two traditional clans. That a clan regrouping could thus occur is a sign of the importance of the church (The united church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands) as a force of change within the villages and a focus for much of the energy which once went into traditional ritual. Clan groups share responsibility for the upkeep of the church, the aid-post (i.e., clinic) and of the cleanliness of the primary school. The daily work of the villages is clearly divided into men's and women's duties. While the Kapari men are responsible for the banana and sugar-cane crops, the women plant and maintain most of the crops, perform the daily household chores and care for the children. The men engage in heavy clearing of the bush, in hunting and in meetings of the village council. The division of roles also occurs in Viriolo, where fishing is the major activity for the men along with the many tasks that support it, such as canoe - building and maintenance and net-making and repair.

Economic activities

The economic life of the Kapari and Viriolo people is influenced greatly by their natural environment. The traditional economy was part of the relationship which the people developed with

the land and the sea. As owners of the land, the Kapari developed their skills of gardening, hunting and spending a great deal of time in tending to their crops. With their seafaring heritage, and no land, the Viriolo are skillful fishermen. Even so, the Kapari men sometimes fish the creeks and the women seek crabs in the mangrove forest and shell fish in the shoreline reefs. The Viriolo cultivate part of the poorer grassland beneath the coconuts of the Coastal strip as a concession from the Kapari people. The rich foothills of the Owen Stanley Range support the cultivation of banana, taro, sweet potato and other tropica, vegetable crops. Traditional custom continues to govern land ownership and to direct the preparation, planting and harvesting of gardens. Kapari families spend a large portion of their time in their garden plots. Every day, except Sunday, small canoes set out for the gardens and return late in the evening, laden with produce.

The influences of post-war developments in Papua New Guinea have changed the immediate environment of the Kapari and Viriolo people. The development of small townships and roads have had an impact on the economic life of these two villages. Today the new local markets of the area offer the Kapari and Viviolo people their major source of cash income. Women carry out all marketing activities and are the sources of information and inter-village gossip. The markets have become the most important meeting places for women of this area.

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Government encouragement of recent small-scale ventures has seen some Kapari families move from a purely subsistence economy to a dual one, where subsistence gardening is practised along with new activities geared to the production of cash crops. The new ventures are mainly family concerns and often suffer from lack of experience and proper advice.

Small trade-stores and passenger vehicles are the two common modern economic activities of some Kapari and Viriolo families. The trade-stores bring in a variety of tinned foodstuffs and a range of imported commodities at exorbitant prices, which include rice, flour, sugar, biscuits and cigarettes.

Community services

Today, community services additional to the pre-existing traditional systems of community support, operate from bases in government and church policies with varying input from the village community. The main areas of such services are local government, law and order, education, health and economic development.

The local church is the most powerful single organization in both villages. As well as providing frequent and regular religious services, the church is the major social institution.

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Amongst the villagers it has created a new elite which in daily life is more important than the traditional figures of authority. It was as much the importance of the annual monetary collection for the church as any other factor that led to restructuring of the Kapari clans. Within each clan of both villages are groups of eight people headed by a deacon. Amongst other activities the groups organize sporting programmes for young people and sponsor the women's and Youth Fellowships. The central place of the church in the life of these villages is important to any understanding of communication on issues affecting the community.

Population

The 1980 population figures showed that Kapari had a population of 600 while Viriolo had 355. Kapari now has 180 houses and Viriolo 52.

SURVEY METHOD

Face-to-face interviews and discussions with several government officers and with Kapari and Viriolo villagers were conducted to identify the information needs of the two villages. The first of these were the interviews with 4 National Government departments and 3 within the Central Provincial Government in Port Moresby. In addition discussions were also held with 4 rural extension officers who worked directly with the villages in the cape Rodney area.

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The interviews with the various government officers aimed to:

1) gain an overview of the agencies' perceptions of information need and their intentions in the area of extension work;

2) find by what means the information generated within the agencies reaches the villages;

3) establish the agencies view of especial merits on deficiencies in the processes which they used.

The household interviews in Kapari involved every third one of the 168 houses and in Viriolo every second one of the 50 houses. This gave a sampling figure of 56 and 25 respectively. In addition discussions were also conducted with leaders of sporting clubs, formal groups and selected individuals.

The interviews and discussions with Kapari and Viriolo villagers were concerned with:

1) what the village people perceived to be their information needs;

2) the adequacy and relevance of information offered by government sources;

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Several difficulties were encountered in using a questionnaire as a basis for the household interviews and discussions. The major difficulties were:

(1) the lack of familiarity of the villagers with questionnaires, which are an alien concept and practice;

(2) the need to translate the original questions into the vernacular of the villagers; the Kapari dialect differs markedly from that of Viriolo;

(3) the necessity of observing Social conventions operating in the two villages (e.g., partaking of food, the niceties of address and decorum), while administering the questionnaire; delay and circumlocution were inevitable;

(4) the varying levels of understanding of meaning and intent of individual questions, despite their being explained in the respondents language and dialect. The interview process itself sometimes provoked puzzlement or suspicion;

(5) the lack of reading and writing facility of many villagers, necessitating an oral presentation.

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The interviews were conducted in the Kapari or Viriolo dialects as appropriate. They took place mainly in the evenings, a time traditionally busy with inter-household visiting, when betelnut and tea are shared over gossip, jokes and serious discussion. During most interviews the entire household was present. The head of the household (traditionally always an adult male) was the main respondent but comments were frequently added by some other adult or teenage members of the family.

SURVEY FINDINGS

GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS ON INFORMATION NEED

All the agencies have specialist sections for extension work. All agencies expressed dissatisfaction, stating that information was not reaching village people. Several interconnected causes of this failure were identified. They included:

1) the difficulty of extension officers meeting with villagers during public service hours, when villagers are usually away from their villages and presumably at work in their gardens or out fishing;[3]

2) the narrow and low level basis of training given to extension officers;

3) the duplication of services by different agencies;

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4) the inadequate number of supervisory staff;

5) the unrealistic expectations of the agencies.

Two important issues bearing on the efficacy of government extension services emerged from the interviews and discussions:

1) there was a lack of regular visits from government officers to villages for the purposes of extension work;

2) there was little acceptance of extension materials as being appropriate for village people. They fail either to meet needs perceived by villagers or to persuade them that government-sponsored innovations are of value to their lives. While to outsiders, the message of a health poster, for example, may seem crucial to the welfare of the community, it is in practice secondary to its decorative use. The conservative nature of traditional society resists the gross changes that are basic to what the extension services attempt to do.

There are three aspects which are of especial interest. One is the means by which information needs have been identified.

In none of the departments was there any evidence of direct consultation with people at the level of rural villages and settlements, where the greater part of the population is found.[4]

The large-scale social and economic changes set in motion by the colonial system were formalized through the creation of agencies and departments to plan and implement the goals and strategies of development. Economic development was seen as a necessary money - producing economy. To this end, and as a tool for bringing about conceptual and practical change in all areas, education in Western forms was seen as essential, and information on developments had to be provided.

A second aspect of the department's perceptions is the emphasis placed on economic development, and on the involvement of rural people in small-scale commercial projects. The departments of Primary Industry, Business Development, encourage an increased involvement in, and reliance on, the monetary economy.

To the extent to which villagers participate in ventures such as rubber production, cattle-rearing, small retail trade-stores and passenger-transport services; they must relinquish many or most of the practices of their subsistence economy. The agencies involved perceive the business-based economy as an area of information need.

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The third aspect is the area of general community development and welfare. The growth of community services in many fields such as education and health was rapid during the 1960s and 1970s. The government is aware that information needs exist in these fields. Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy are common on Papua New Guinea, and seriously effect large sections of the population. Infant mortality has always been of high incidence, and the problem of malnutrition is especially acute today. In traditional society these conditions existed, but were ascribed to causes different from those perceived by medical science. Information on the causes and treatment of disease was shared as part of traditional lose amongst the general population or a specialist section of it, such as sorcerers. The Department of Health perceives a need for general and specific information on health alongside practical medical treatment.

These three aspects of departmental perceptions of information need are not found in every government department, but all are significant and contribute to a total national and provincial government viewpoint. The first of them, the inclination of the government and its departments to define information needs without direct reference to the people, apparently operates from assumptions that government initiated rural services are what the people should have, rather than consulting the people on what they themselves perceive their information needs are. The other two, the supreme importance of economic development and the need for programmes of community development and welfare, have a history of well established

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policy and continuous change.

Village perceptions on information need

A considerable gap exists between government perceptions and those of village people on many matters besides information needs. It can be argued that this is inevitable in Papua New Guinea, where the greater part of the people remain closely attached to their traditions, while a small elite group governs the country through a bureaucratic service whose members are, in Western terms relatively well-educated. Given the colonial experience of Papua New Guinea and the government structures that were established then, it would be difficult to argue that the directions of development could now be so radically changed as to make a strong national economy unnecessary, and programmes of road-building health improvement and education undesirable. To that degree government policies for rural development and information needs may be valid. At the village community level, however, there is a lack of consultation and of opportunity for people to be accurately informed on government initiatives to receive an efficient response to their perceived information needs, and so to initiate or influence development programmes. With an almost total lack of feedback from the village and district levels, this inevitably causes not only confusion and dissatisfaction, but the hinderance of government schemes which rely on village acceptance and support.

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The responses to the household interviews and discussions, which sought to identify recent information needs, can be seen partly as a reaction to so unusual a survey being conducted. It has already been remarked that a survey of the present kind has no place in village culture. An intrusion of this kind, then, was perceived as relating to activities outside the usual village community affairs, that is, to government matters. The Government matters identified as areas of information need were; land-ownership, small business ventures, education of children and youth, and subsequent job opportunities, development and management of traditional food crops, fishing, health, and sports and recreation. Amongst these are several areas which show that the Kapari and Viriolo villagers have a considerable interest in development within a cash economy. The interest in small businesses within the villages, such as trade-stores, passenger motor vehicles, and commercial fishing, and beyond the village in rubber growing and cattle husbandry, are clear indications of this.

Information on small-scale economic development was the need most strongly expressed. Second was the need for information on community welfare which would improve the lives of villages people. The improvement of traditional food crops through the introduction of new varieties of garden produce or improved agricultural techniques was the other need. In Viriolo, improved knowledge of the maintenance and repair of the outboard motors used on canoes would benefit not only the commerical fishermen but the village households which depend on fishing for their daily food, and which use

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canoes for transport of firewood or garden and market produce.

Knowledge to assist an improvement in the general health of the family through better nutrition, hygiene and treatment of disease was identified as a need by only a small number of respondents, and information in the recreational field by a even fewer. The small response in these two areas highlights a difficulty in interpretation. In Kapari and Viriolo, traditional recreation activities have been overeaid by Western sports such as cricket, netball, volley-ball and soccer. So commonly played are these sports that those who play them generally feel competent and knowledgeable.

In the sphere of community health the small number of enquiries does not reflect the condition of the health of the community. Where the concrete outcomes of commerce have attracted many towards small businesses, and the consequent neglect of traditional economic activities, most villagers are not as yet convinced that community health is of a standard that requires improvement. The traditional systems of treatment, involving folk medicine and often sorcery, remain strong. The relatively high rate of infant mortality, of malnutrition amongst children, and of endemic disease, is accepted as a necessary part of life. The perceived need, then, fails to match the "real" need.

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The example of health emphasizes the fact that the disparity between government and village perceptions is not always to the villagers' disadvantage. An appreciation of the perceived needs of villagers, should not be taken as a definitive statement of their actual needs. The rapidity and scale of the changes in many aspects of village life and in the total socio-economic patterns of Papua New Guinea is such that many information needs remain hidden from the consciousness of most people. While this does not vindicate a neglect of the perceived needs of villagers, it does suggest that needs beyond those must be identified by an examination of all aspects of modern Papua New Guinea.

Information delivery: government & Village modes

There was clear evidence during the field research that the flow of information was incomplete from district to village level so there was often a complete breakdown.[5] Such a situation contains two problems. One is that of the departmental transmission of information which was not reaching its intended target. The second is that of the rural people whose perceived needs were not being met, and whose behaviour often facitly rejected, or failed to accept, the information which reached the village. The interviews with government officers at national and provincial levels revealed perceptions of the factors working against an efficient information flow.

The reasons for the breakdown of the information flow.

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1) the lack of resources for the production of materials;

2) the lack of sufficiently trained field officers, and of supervision of their work;[6]

3) the lack of consultation with, and involvement of, rural people;

4) the lack of commitment on the part of field officers, including a neglect of village visits;

5) the absence of feedback at all levels;

o) insufficient co-ordination with the media.

The household interviews in Kapari and Viriolo revealed that the extended local community itself is both the most highly favoured source of information and regarded as the most effective. The "extended local community" includes the villagers living in Kapari and Viriolo and those who work and live in Port Moresby, amongst whom were several senior public servants. This extended community was identified by all respondents as a source of their general knowledge of government projects and activities in their local area. A large majority of those who had actively sought information on government matters has used the extended community as its main source. The public servants in Port Moresby were especially important in this regard. Government officials based in Kupiana were an important information source only to those villagers who were engaged in commercial ventures.

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This indicates some effectiveness in a specialist area, which involves rural agricultural and business development officers. Others, such as rural health officers, were not identified as information sources.

The primary importance of the extended community as an information source reflects an aspect of traditional life, where, apart from the effects of trading excursions into neighbouring lands and chance encounters with strangers, the communities were self-supporting in their intellectual, religious and social life as well as its economy. The continuing strength of traditional beliefs and values, and the various unsatisfactory features of government information services work together to obstruct information delivery from official sources.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Identifying information needs

Consultation with villagers is necessary for an accurate and comprehensive identification of their information needs. Both direct consultation and feedback from the field are important aspects of this purpose.

1) A systematic and continuing programme of enquiry into the perceived needs of rural people should be instituted.

2) Where government policy makers perceive, in the national interest, information needs other than those identified by the people, strategies to create community awareness should be implemented

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as a preparation for extension programmes; feedback on community acceptance should modify subsequent extension programmes.

Information delivery

Information delivery is currently inhibited by a number of factors. The following suggestions aim to improve information flow:

1) The respective responsibilities of the national and provincial governments should be given clearly defined roles, with regard to extension activities.

2) A District Information Office (D.I.O.) with a trained team of District Information Officers should be established in each district. The District Information Officer should liase with the extension officers of the specialist departments located at the district headquarters and co-ordinate all extension work. While specialist Departments (e.g., Health and Primary Industry) would use their officers in specific projects, such as the development of a small rubber project or a village health survey, the District Information officer would be an advisor on such activities and able to discuss them at a general level with villagers.

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3) All extension officers, whether those of national departments or the District Information Officers, should be fluent speakers of the local language or lingua franca. They should be selected for positive attitudes to their role and sufficient educational background, and be trained in the techniques of establishing a good relationship with village people.

4) All printed materials should be in the local language or lingua francea.

5) Strategies to ensure feedback through all levels of communication should be implemented.

6) A specialist agency for the production and adaption of audio-visual materials, including film and video-recorded materials, should be created; realistically, this may have to be at a national level, co-operating with and serving the needs of provinces.

7) A national programme of adult literacy in vernaculars and/or lingua francae should be instituted to assist in better access to printed materials, to strengthen the conceptual basis for understanding extension programmes and to lessen the gap between people with some education and those with none.

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8) District Information Officers should liase with the provincial radio station to ensure that special programmes assist in current topics of concern to rural people. As a means of communication from development authorities to the people, the radio is relatively useful.

9) Community Information Centres should be established in each rural community as a means of making the supply of information more efficient, and the resultant feedback more certain. This suggestion is discussed in more detail below.

Community Information Centre (C.I.C.)

The Community Information Centre is described here as it would operate in any village or community.[7]

The C.I.C. is so named to reflect a number of considerations:

1) The word "Community" is already in use in these situations, in the name of community school (i.e., primary school). There it is used to emphasize its relationship to its community, which has the power to manage its affairs and to be served by it.

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2) The C.I.C. should be placed in a defined community; that is, a village or cluster of villages such as Kapari and Viriolo, or a small town or settlement.

3) The C.I.C. should serve its community as a focal point of enquiry, as a general information resource, and as an effective link in the flow of information from government sources, and others to rural people.

4) It should develop in the community a conscious awareness of their access to information on all matters of interest, and of the availability of extension programmes.

5) It should regularize extension and information activities to overcome the sporadic and haphazard nature of current strategies.

The C.I.C. should be controlled by a Board of Management drawn from the community, as is already the practice for all community schools. The Board would have three major responsibilities. These would be in appointing a manager; establishing guidelines for the centres operation such as times of opening, and co-ordinating requests and suggestions for extension programmes and topics of enquiry for the monthly meetings at the centre.

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The C.I.C. should also be the operating base for a District information officer. The regular scheduling of such visits would overcome the problem of villagers being elsewhere, as now frequently happens when extension officers visit. Through regular visits, the District Information Officer would present a prepared programme to all the community at an open meeting. Such regular visits would make the District Information Officer known to the villagers.

The C.I.C. is seen as a centre where suitable pamphlets, leaflets and other printed materials on specific topics would be stocked so that the villagers can have easy access to them. Posters and pictorial material, simply but sufficiently captioned, should be displayed to attract villagers to the centre. Special displays of relevant and suitably designed materials should be mounted in conjunction with the monthly community meetings such as those of the Rural Health Extension visits. Such activities would enable villagers to identify their existing and developing information needs and demand practical answers from the respective specialist extension officers. Such a practice would not only provide villagers with access to reinforcement of information initially communicated at the meeting but would ensure a steady growth of information on rural extension.

The C.I.C. should be placed in close conjunction with the community school as part of a single complex designed to enable easy access by villagers even during school hours without disruption of the school programme and easy access by school at appropriate times. This physical integration

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of C.I.C. and community school aims to enhance an appreciation of the C.I.C. as an active feature of normal village life rather than an isolated special-occasion building. It would aim to increase the awareness of the relationship education, access to information, and relevant extension programmes. A successfully operating C.I.C. should broaden the community's perception of education to include the concept to education as a continuing possibility in adult life, and one with relevant and practical outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The villages of Kapari and Viriolo typify many aspects of those rural villages of Papua New Guinea which have road access to towns. While they retain much of their Culture, they have experienced far - reaching change. Their own languages are intact, but are replaced in some transactions by more recently introduced ones. Their traditional economic activities remain basic to their lives, but are supplemented by cash purchases and commercial enterprises. Traditional medical practices continue alongside modern medicine and health care. Basic to much of this change is the education system, which has introduced many new concepts, attempting to graft them onto traditional, and often conflicting, notions. For many years Kapari and Viriolo have formed part of a cultural system, both within the Hula-speaking villages and with connections beyond it. Their traditions have been shaped by their history and environment. The close match between knowledge and its transmission, between information needs and their satisfaction, was broken during the colonial period. The changes that began then continue today, when the need to recognise and meet them is urgent.

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The frequent conflict between the old and the new, between indigenous and introduced concepts and practices, leads as much to confusion as to progress. Much that was valuable has been lost and much that has potential value is misunderstood and misapplied. Central to any effective remedies for this confusion lies the need for research into the information needs of the people. These needs include both those which the people themselves perceive and those which are apparent to public officials and others involved in activities touching on the present and future lives of the village people. Once information needs are identified, they must be met swiftly and effectively. If this is not done, the destruction of valuable cultural traditions will continue without thought and the gulf will widen between the people's understanding and the schemes of the government and its agencies.

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